

Gunner's Dog House Dangerous Toys!

Dog Care: Dangerous Toys

by the American Animal Hospital Association

Fluffy may love her ball of yarn, and Rover may chase after that darn stick all day, but pet owners must be cautious when offering toys to their pets. Many household items that become pet toys, either with or without your knowledge, can be dangerous-even fatal-to your furry or feathered friend. If not used in the appropriate manner, some store-bought pet toys, too, can cause problems.

Pet owners should take note of the following potential toy hazards:

- Sticks and bones can splinter and cause choking or vomiting, or they can perforate the mouth, throat or intestine. Hard bones can easily damage teeth. Instead, use hard, non-splintering chew toys to play fetch or to allow your pet to gnaw.
- Soft, latex toys can be shredded by a chewing pet. If the toy includes a squeaking mechanism, the squeaker can be easily swallowed or cause choking.
- Superballs can cause intestinal obstruction if ingested. Other types of balls, such as tennis balls or handballs, may be too small for the pet playing with them and cause choking.
- Towels, socks, underwear and other similar clothing or materials can be swallowed by a rambunctious pet, causing intestinal obstruction.
- Some dogs like to chew on or eat rocks-bad idea! Rocks can cause broken teeth and serious intestinal obstruction if swallowed.
- Be careful if you offer your pet rawhides, as these can also cause intestinal obstruction if swallowed, and some are preserved with arsenic, which is toxic to pets.
- Be aware of sharp objects that can cut skin, feet, eyes or ears.

"Probably the most common hazards are toys that are inappropriately sized for the pet," says Dr. Jennifer Zablony, an AAHA veterinarian. "Generally, the toy is too small for the size of the pet and can be destroyed and cause choking."

If you notice anything unusual about your pet's behavior or health, call your veterinarian right away. If a toy or part of a toy is swallowed, signs of problems (like intestinal upset or blockage) may occur within minutes or hours; other times, you may not notice anything unusual for days. The obstruction may pass through with no more signs than vomiting or diarrhea. Or it may cause blockage, in which case your pet may be constipated or not want to eat. In any case, if you even suspect that your pet has swallowed a foreign object, call the veterinarian immediately.

Used appropriately and with common sense, many household and store-bought pet toys can provide hours of entertainment and exercise for your pet. It's a good idea, however, to supervise your pet during play. Not only will this minimize the chance of accidents happening, but you'll also be providing your pet with quality time spent with his or her favorite toy - YOU!



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